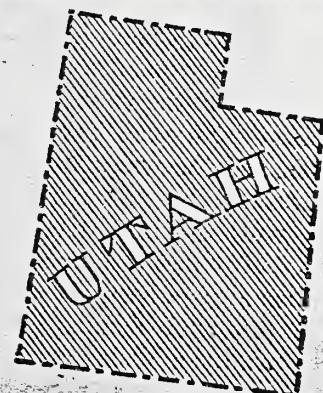


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Our Western States



Utah, The Salt Lake State

By E.T. Wilson



N expedition sent by the Spanish explorer, Coronado, journeyed through Utah as far as the Colorado River in 1540. More than two hundred years later two Franciscan friars, looking for a direct route to the Pacific, reached Utah Lake. In another century trappers and immigrants began to cross the country. But no attempts were made as yet to settle in this arid desert land. The Indians were practically the only inhabitants until the Mormons sought refuge there in 1847.

The first Mormon colonists, under their famous leader, Brigham Young, settled on the shores of the Great Salt Lake, Utah. Here was a new country which they could make theirs, a land where they could live their lives, free from fear of persecution.

Like all pioneers they suffered at first from lack of food, clothes and shelter. But they soon built log and adobe huts, irrigated the soil and sold crops, planted fruit trees. A school was quickly established in a tent, with rough log seats and desks, and the settlers constructed a building which served as a church, courthouse and capitol. Thus started the now beautiful Salt Lake City.

The discovery of gold in California
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brought the Mormons prosperity. For the streams of gold seekers stopped at Salt Lake City and eagerly bought the produce the Utah pioneers brought into town in their prairie schooners. Mormons began to arrive at the settlement from all parts of the United States; some even came from England.

They organized a government and sought admission to the Union as the State of Deseret—in the "Book of Mormon" the word "deseret" signifies industry. Congress refused to recognize the State of Deseret, but in 1850 the Territory of Utah was organized. Brigham Young was the first territorial governor. Young was an able leader, with a forceful personality and iron will. He followed devoutly all the Mormon doctrines, including that of plural marriage. When he died in 1877 he left about nineteen wives and fifty-seven children. There is a famous rock in Echo Cañon, much like a pulpit, where, it is said, Young preached his first sermon in Utah to his Mormon followers.

In 1869 the Union Pacific Railroad was extended across the southern part of Utah Territory. The State then had access to the markets of the Mississippi Valley and Pacific coast. Its industrial growth was assured.

A law was passed against the plural

marriage custom in 1887, and in 1890 the practice was abolished. In 1896 Utah was admitted to the Union as a State. Heber M. Wells was the first State governor. The Hon. Charles R. Mabey is Utah's present governor. Like many of those who hold high offices, Governor Mabey had a humble start in life. He began his career in the picturesque calling of a sheep-herder, and in his boyhood he also worked as a farmhand and a rancher.

"Industry" is the motto of Utah; the beehive is its symbol, and the sego lily is the State flower. The Mormons chose this flower because its roots nourished them during their early years of famine.

The gull is held in especial regard in Utah. When the first settlers in the region were tormented by an invasion of crickets upon their fields and gardens, the accommodating and ravenous gulls came to their rescue and devoured all the invaders.

Utah was named for the Ute or Utah tribe of Indians; the word means "highlander." The State holds tenth place in size, having an area of 84,990 square miles. Its population of 449,396 places it fortieth in rank.

This great plateau covered with sagebrush and broken by mountains, lies between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevadas. In shape Utah is almost a rectangle. Wyoming cuts its northeast corner. Colorado forms the rest of the eastern boundary. Nevada lies on the west, Arizona on the south, and Idaho on the north.

The Uinta Range forms a barrier along the eastern part of the northern boundary of Utah. The Wasatch Mountains cross the State from north to south. East of the Wasatch Range is an elevated plain, whose surface is broken by detached ranges. West of it is the Great Basin, a region of arid valleys separated by steep mountains.

The valleys at the foot of the snow-covered peaks are fertile. But the Great

American Desert covers an area of 4,000 square miles west of the Great Salt Lake.

Except in this great desert, crops grow luxuriantly where irrigation is practiced. The Mormons were the first to introduce irrigation into the west. They divided their land into small farms of about equal size, and the irrigating systems were controlled by Mormon authorities who, with an impartial and economical eye, distributed the water.

Agriculture has always been the chief industry. The principal farming sections are in the Salt Lake Valley and the rich Cache Valley, in the north central part of the State. Hay, wheat, oats and potatoes are raised. Large quantities of sugar beets are grown in irrigated soil. At Dewey, in the northern part of the State, there are thousands of acres covered with this vegetable. Other vegetables, grains and fruit are grown in the State. Figs, lemons, almonds, and raisin grapes are cultivated in the southern counties.

Experiment stations have been established in the arid districts of the State to demonstrate that crops can be grown without irrigation. Much hay and wheat is now produced on these dry farms. Livestock, especially sheep and cattle, is raised on the eastern plateau.

National forests cover 7,449,000 acres, containing a large part of the woodland area of Utah. The most densely forested sections are in the Uinta Mountains, on the Aquarius Plateau, and along the Sevier River.

In the early development of Utah, Brigham Young discouraged mining and directed the energies of the people to agriculture. But after his death the mining industry became active. This brought an influx of non-Mormon settlers, who have gradually increased.

There are extensive coal deposits in the eastern slopes of the Wasatch Mountains and in the southern part of the State. Copper and lead are the chief

metals. Utah is third in the output of lead, and fourth in the production of copper. Silver and gold, iron ore and zinc are produced, and alunite, a pink crystal rock.

The State contains an important rock-salt district at Salduro, beyond the Oquirrh Mountains. Here is an immense bed of solid salt, sixty miles long. It is cut into squares by grooving machines hauled by six-ton motor trucks. When the blocks have been cut out, they are sawed into marketable size. Much of this salt is shipped in solid pieces; some of it is refined at Salt Lake City.

No animal or vegetable life exists on this desert expanse. The silence is so great that the sound of a horses' hoofs can be heard for miles; even the ticking of a watch is like that of a large clock. An object a mile away looks immense; mountains fifty miles off seem near.

Utah ranks ninth among the salt-producing States. Sea salt is taken from the Great Salt Lake. Asphalt, sulphur, pumice, gypsum, granite, marble, slate, limestone, sandstone, clay, mineral waters and a radium-bearing mineral, called uvarite, are produced.

The Colorado River, formed by the union of the Green and Grand Rivers, is the most important in the State. The San Juan River enters southeastern Utah from Colorado. The northwestern corner of the State is drained by small tributaries of the Snake River in Idaho. The rest of Western Utah is included in the Great Basin region, the greatest area of interior drainage in the United States. The Sevier is the chief river of this section. The Provo, Weber, and Bear Rivers rise in the Uinta Mountains and flow into Utah Lake, the largest fresh water lake in Utah. The Great Salt Lake and smaller lakes of this region are remnants of an immense fresh water lake which in olden times covered almost all of Utah. The shore lines of this former lake can be seen on the hillsides.

The Great Salt Lake is the largest lake of salt water in the United States. It is eighty miles long and thirty miles wide and has no outlet. Four barrels of its water will yield almost a barrel of salt. The lake is so salty that ice will not form unless the temperature is down to zero. No fish live in the briny waters, but a very small "brine shrimp" inhabits them, and a certain fly passes the larval stage there. The brown skins which the fly leaves behind often darken portions of the lake's surface.

A trapper, Jim Bridger, discovered the Great Salt Lake in 1824. Bridger thought this body of water must surely be an arm of the Pacific Ocean. General Fremont was the first white man to navigate the lake; he did so in 1842 on his way to Oregon.

Shrubs growing close to the lake's waters become incrusted with crystallized salt, resembling branches of coral or white-rock candy; some of them are very beautiful.

Utah has a dry climate; the lofty elevation and lack of humidity make it invigorating and healthful. In the southwest the heat in summer is almost tropical, but in the high mountains it is cool and freezes almost every night in the year. The winters are mild in the southern part of the State, severe in the northern.

A variety of beautiful scenery greets the traveler to Utah: cañons and cliffs; cascades and waterfalls, dashing over brilliantly-covered rocks; flower-covered hill slopes, gray deserts, and clay mesas.

There are in the State three remarkable natural bridges: the Nonnezoshi, the Edwin, and the Augusta Sandstone. These are in the White Cañon, better known as the Bridge Cañon.

The little town of Bluff, lying close to the San Juan River, is the starting point for a trip to White Cañon. Around Bluff the Ute Indians are much in evidence.



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